

PRESIDENT'S LETTER – DOUG KIRK**Miscellaneous Stuff**

It is so wonderful to have KBC group rides going again. So far I haven't heard of any pandemic-related problems at all. Instead, I've been certifying more KBC ride leaders than ever, which is just great! Groups are good-sized and seem larger every week. We have regular club rides every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and women's rides every Tuesday and Friday. Come out and join the fun!

How long since you took a good look at the KBC website, www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org? Maybe I'm biased since my wife Kathy is the webmaster nowadays and I see how much updating she's done. Our website is a really valuable resource. There is so much good information, it takes a while to take it all in. So take some time and look around. I bet you learn plenty.

Kaltour was June 27th, near the end (I hope) of this year's end-of-June Monsoon. So much rain, day after day. I'm sure the weather caused this year's relatively low turnout, which is a shame because the folks who took their chances got great cycling weather, great camaraderie, excellent food, and even the gravel roads were just fine (as long as you don't mind an occasional washout)!

Finally, I want to encourage all of you to give bike-touring a try this summer. You don't need any special equipment other than a seatpost rack and bag, and a fanny pack. Kathy and I have toured this way many, many times. If there's a better quick vacation for both body and mind, I don't know what it is.

We call it our trips Tiny Town Tours. We stay at motels, B & Bs, or friends' houses. We eat at restaurants or buy food at a store and look for a park or a picnic table. In mid-summer we need so little clothing that it's actually surprising how little stuff we need to take along. A few toiletries, undies, shorts, and a t-shirt for off the bike. Arm warmers and a jacket to go with bike shorts, socks and a jersey for on the bike. Personal items like wallet, bike food and glasses go in a fanny pack. We wash our bike clothes in the shower each evening. Total additional weight less than 10 lbs.

With cellphones, Google Maps and Ride with GPS we don't even carry paper maps anymore (The KBC website has literally dozens of routes available using Ride /w GPS.) It's easy to stay out a week or more this way, so easy that in the last few years Kathy and I have ridden through nearly every west Michigan town big enough to have a motel from Niles to Mackinaw City. Give touring a try this summer! Even just one overnight on the road will show you what how much fun is to be had!

Email: president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

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As KBC resumes group riding activities, please send photos of your rides to:

editor@kalamazooBicycleClub.org

KBC Meeting Notes—June 8, 2021

Finance report as of 06/7/21

Pam Sotherland

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) AC-COUNTS: \$14,802

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$1,785

Monthly EXPENSES: **\$1,208**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$15,379

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,554

Discretionary Expenses: **\$500**

Education Fund: **\$5,008**

ROR21: **\$1,145**

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,000

KRVT Pledge: **\$1,000**

AVAILABLE FREE BALANCE: \$8,825

Current Cash minus Designated Funds minus Encumbered Expenses

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,189

The next KBC meeting will be Tuesday, July 13 at 7:00 p.m. at Texas Drive Park

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) REPORTS:

President: Doug Kirk

Celebrate KBC group rides starting! Kudos to everyone who participated in the Dirty Donut.

Treasurer: Paul Guimond presented the treasurer's report on behalf of Pam Sotherland:

Previous Cash Balance: \$14,802

Receipts (Income): \$1,785 (received)

Expenses: \$1,208

Income less Expenses: \$577

Total Designated Cash: \$6,554

Free Balance (for budgeted expenses): \$8,825

Certificate of Deposit: \$6,189

DIRECTORS REPORTS:

Kaltour Director: Mike Krischer

KalTour is Sunday, June 27, 2021. Spread the word! Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at Schoolcraft High School at 6pm (rain date Thursday, June 17, 2021) to help paint arrows for KalTour. It would be helpful to have a few more volunteers at registration starting at 7am. Volunteers are needed at the Richland Park to assist with the century riders stopping at the SAG stop. A suggestion was made to ask Team Clark Logic if there is any interest and availability to assist with marking the gravel routes. Jillian encouraged everyone to reshare the Facebook event/post to get word out. Anyone interested in volunteering should reach out to Mike at kaltour@kalamazoobicycleclub.org.

Education Chair: Paul Wells

League Certified Instructor (LCI) training is happening August 13-15, 2021. Those who have taken the smart cycling 101 class are eligible to apply for funding of \$400, **LCI Chain Gang Memorial Scholarship**. The application and more information will be available on the KBC website <https://www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org/>

There are 33 remaining **5-foot passing signs**. KBC and Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) are discussing who and how more signs will be paid for. An idea was suggested to place signs along the KalTour route near intersections.

Ride Round the Town is happening on one Thursday each month at 6 pm on the following dates at the following

KBC Meeting Notes Cont.

locations this summer:

June 17, Open Roads

July 15, Gull Lake High School

August 12, Schrier Park – preregistration is necessary (no cost is associated)

September 9, Lewis Park

This event is an outreach program that is a short, community ride that is family-oriented and KBC members are encouraged to attend and volunteer.

Be on the lookout for **Driving Change** ads targeted to cyclists and drivers to promote safe cycling.

NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

KBC Jerseys: Kathy Kirk

Jersey pick-up during the meeting! Kathy is more than willing to make arrangements with anyone who is unable to attend a KBC meeting.

Pump Repair Stand at Kal-Haven Caboose: Doug Kirk

A goal is for KBC to consider purchasing a bike pump repair stand, there is currently one at the Kal-Haven trail-head that may need to be fixed. After KalTour, this discussion can be revisited after KBC finances have been evaluated.

Communications Coordinator: Jillian Howland

A reminder about Time Trials happening the first and third Tuesday of the month at Pavilion Township Hall. Ride Our Routes is happening and send your photos to Jillian for social media. Jillian will create signups for KalTour volunteers and 'Round the Town rides.

Open Roads: Terry O'Connor

Open Roads is open and accepting donations on Thursdays and Fridays 2-6pm. Consider donating!

Meeting adjourned 8:06PM

ATTENDANCE:	Steve Groetsema	Kathy Kirk	Ted Robinson
Hank Apothecker	Paul Guimond	Bob Klose	Bill Surna
Shaun Ballard	Barb Hart	Mike Krischer	Gordy Vader
Stacie Ballard	John Hart	Julie Knowlton	Paul Wells
Clark Bennett	Jillian Howland	Renee Mitchell	Rick Whaley
Phillip Fisher	Marc Irwin	Terry O'Connor	
Dawn Gross	Doug Kirk	Bill Price	

KBC Statistics (Thanks to Rick Whaley for managing these details!)

Please check for your name here!

Total Memberships: 289 — Total Individuals: 502

New or Renewed Members: Ethan Alexander; Karen Applebey; David Asper; Sandy Blix; John Bolton & Family; Mike Conway; Lauren Cummings; Alan Dahl; Thomas Dewhirst; Kitty Flatland; Collin Greenop; Jim Hemenway; Madison Hooley; Mark Johnson; Michelle Karpinski; Amy Kutcha; Mecka & Robert Lassitter; Val Litznerski; Nathan Mack; Todd Maguire; Cheryl-Marie Manson; Rob McDougall; Jason Millership; Ben Miron; Ken Mohney; Courtney Moser; Marilyn Munro; Kevin Oostema & Family; Paul Rehkopf; Leslie Scheffers; Jeremy Sikkema; Cathy Simms & Family; Tom Sprinkle; Tim Stewart; Steven Town; Gordy Vader; Dan Victor; Mitch Wilson; Wilson Xu & Family

July Expiring Members: Kathy Rubino; Paul Wells

Education Committee Update—Paul Wells, chair

How happy I am to be heading back toward normal and riding with others and doing KBC group rides. I'm thinking now about rejoining the Wednesday Night Ride, and being conscious of retuning my group riding skills. Talk about personal responsibility! Group rides are definitely an exercise in personal responsibility, and trust that the others are also alert and takin' care of business.

Speaking of group rides, the '**Round the Town**' community rides have begun, with a nice ride on the KRVT, starting at Open Roads Bicycle Program. We had nine great folks, from Open Roads, KBC, and the Kalamazoo area community. We also had Charlotte, a very friendly and enthusiastic canine non-pedaler riding in her trailer, pulled by her human, Adam. We rode to the Kalamazoo Nature Center and back, at a moderate pace, and a few chose to ride to the north end of the trail at D Ave. Most of us hung out afterwards to get to know each other better, and shared some beverages.

Our next '**Round the Town**' ride will be on Thursday, July 15, on country roads in the Richland area. We will leave from Gull Lake High School, meeting at 6:00 for bike checks and a brief group riding review. Everyone is welcome, and we encourage KBC folks to join us. Paul Runnels, of the Chain Gang, KBC, and Bike Friendly Kalamazoo will be our leader.

KBC will be awarding scholarships of \$400 each to a few KBC members and potentially others in the local Kalamazoo cycling community for League of American Bicyclists' (LAB) League Certified Instructor training course. This three-day seminar is scheduled for August 13, 14 and 15 at City Hall in Portage. The League's one-day Smart Cycling course is a required prerequisite. Several KBC members have taken Smart Cycling and are eligible, if they choose to take the LCI course. There may be others in the greater Kalamazoo area who would take the LCI training as well. For details of League of American Bicyclists educational programs, go to <https://www.bikeleague.org/>

W AVENUE RIDE RETURNS! — JULY 10, 2021 — 9 A.M.

The 21st (Almost) Annual W Ride is back! And at a special new time of year, just for 2021! It will be held on Saturday, July 10 at 9:00 A.M. from the east parking lot of Vicksburg High School. And just what is the meaning of the letter “W?” Read on and find out.

Since this is still an even numbered year, the route will be the Non-Classic W Ride Route. So, after we leave the parking lot, we will turn left and luxuriate in W Avenue-ness all the way to Calhoun County. Then, we’ll turn around and continue the W experience back to Vicksburg. We’ll stop at the Shell station for our eating and drinking pleasure and then we will continue via W Avenue, of course, to the Van Buren County line. Then, for the fourth act of our riding adventure, we will ride back to the Vicksburg High School parking lot, where Gatorade and snacks await, because we’ve earned it. Forty-eight miles, one road, and, as we all know, 48+1 = Fun!

Maps will be provided, due to force of habit, if for no other reason. The Ride Leader will lead a group averaging about 15 to 16 mph, but the RL is confident that there will be other groups riding at different speeds. *(Editor’s note: previous versions of the map have been edible, such as Twizzlers; some graphical, like pencils and pens; others periodontal, including toothpicks and dental floss. It is worth attending just to experience the cartographic ingenuity of the W Ride leader!) [Second editor’s note: W Ave RL Rick Whaley denies ever using pencils or dental floss as maps. Seems like a darned good idea to me, though.]*

So, take advantage of this opportunity and join the RL for the ride of a lifetime or at least of a July 10th. And it shouldn’t be cold this year!

Rick Whaley, W Ride Leader

A Note of Thanks shared by Vice President Paul Guimond

Friends,

I dropped off a 5-foot passing sign, a 5-foot bumper stick and flowers to the daughter of the man who was killed while riding his bike back in May. She asked if she could get a sign and bumper sticker.

She reached out to Jillian (Howland, Communications Director).

She asked me to let folks know that she appreciated the sign and sticker and said to keep up the good work to educate and be advocates for cycling.

So, on behalf of Ruby, I am passing along her thanks to you all.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best,

Paul G

Editor’s note: Paul, thanks to you for sharing and for representing the club and cycling community so well!

Makes You Want to Ride Your Bike - Editor's Letter

I blew up 4 miles from the end.

Yesterday I was the ride leader for a group of 9 cyclists. "Ride Leader" is pretty unofficial these days. I simply put a note on social media that I am doing a ride. I list the start location and time, the estimated speed and distance, and people show up. (Note: this was written before the resumption of official KBC rides). There is no special suit, uniform or even pin on my shirt. At its most basic, a ride leader is someone who organizes a ride.

And yet most people don't want to do it. Our club has people who go through a formal process of becoming sanctioned ride leaders and still won't call a ride together or even post a ride on Facebook. And during the pandemic, our club still isn't holding official club rides, at least until some of the COVID transmission metrics improve. I understand that being a ride leader means that you might be seen as responsible if someone gets hurt during a ride that you organized. That sense of responsibility may give people pause. Other would-be ride leaders might feel that they should be the strongest cyclist in the group. They might think that "ride leader" means being on the front the whole trip. For the past few weeks, I have been building an addition on our home. While I remember how to do the work of building with wood and steel, for most of the past three decades I have been sitting in air-conditioned offices, conserving my energy until I could expend it on the bike after office hours. Keeping up with my college student helpers all day in the heat is the exact opposite of stewarding my energy! When I call it quits at 4 p.m., this body feels wrung out. So even if I was a strong cyclist a month ago, I am not this month!

In the for-what-it's-worth category, I don't think the ride leader should be the strongest in the group. Or even if they are, they shouldn't be on the front the whole time. That would conflict with other responsibilities which come with being a ride leader. These are less about liability in the legal or financial sense and more about stewarding or shepherding a group of people. These obligations are unstated, but implicit. Somewhat like the unwritten rules of baseball. Everyone knows they exist, but because they are unwritten, there is no defined cannon! And I believe that this tacit social contract is what keeps some potential ride leaders from actualizing that potential.

So here are some of the things on my list. Please comment and let me know what else is on yours! First is route selection. Julie shared with me that she was going to lead a recent ride with her friends. Because I was working on this piece, I asked what it means to lead the ride. The first thing she said was "picking the route." For sure. And along with the route would be the estimated speed, any important information (e.g. the bathrooms at the park are locked or we



Group ride lead by Gordy Vader on a recent Monday night.

will stop for donuts at the Amish bakery, etc.) and start time. Notice I don't include whether this is a no drop ride or not. If you invite people to ride with you and expect to drop them, you aren't leading a ride. That is called a race. I like races. I pay to participate in several every year. But this piece is about ride leaders, not race leaders. The expectation of a race leader is quite clear: go faster than everyone else.

Good ride leaders set clear expectations, then gently reinforce them. As we gather for a ride I usually remind people that when they hear the cry, "car back," we are to move toward the right. Yes, I know that in Michigan we have the legal right to ride two abreast. And to take the full lane. But the laws of physics always trump the laws of Michigan. I want us all to come home safely. In my experience, if we make room for the cars, we are less likely to make motorists angry. On a recent ride we heard someone at the back call out that a car was behind us. As we planned, people passed the word up the line. And yet there was a cyclist to the left of the yellow line. He was riding in the opposite lane, exactly where the car would need to pass us. I asked him by name to come back off the yellow line and to stay in our lane. He snapped back that he could hear (implying that he didn't need my reminder). However, he did move over, and I didn't see him riding in the opposite lane the rest of the ride.

At the beginning of the last paragraph I said, "gently reinforce them." I was the recipient of aggressive enforcement a couple decades ago. My cycling life began in earnest at age 13 when a local bike shop owner sold handmade Treks to us and then rode with a handful of junior high schoolers, teaching us to ride. I took about 10 years off from riding while I went to college, grad school, and started my career. When I came back to cycling I guess I was squirrely. As I began to join some group rides I must have been erratic, weaving around potholes. The owner of the shop which sponsored that ride (not in Kalamazoo) hollered at me in a way that felt humiliating. He hadn't set expectations and he wasn't gentle. (He was right, however, so after my anger settled, I adjusted my riding and became a better group rider.) One new expectation that I have been setting and gently reinforcing is "Go off the back if you need to spit or clear your nose." This has always been a good idea, but COVID really brought it to the surface. I set that expectation before the ride and at about the 2 mile point one guy spit at the front of the group. I said to him, "You're off the back when you spit, right?" He said, "Yeah, I remembered as I was doing it!" No harsh words, and he corrected the behavior.

Good ride leaders also help the participants. Many times I have zipped up to the front to ask a strong rider to drop the pace a bit. Or sometimes ride next to them to set a steady pace if they are surging faster and slower. If a rider falls off the pace and loses contact with the group, someone should drop back and help tow them up to the group. I distinctly remember a time when I was in over my head more than 20 years ago. It was one of the first times I had ridden with this group and they were on a route I didn't know. As we turned into a headwind, I couldn't keep the pace and got dropped. I remember the relief I felt when one of the stronger riders appeared and gave me a friendly wheel to follow. I don't think the ride leader personally needs to drop back, but he or she should ensure that someone is watching the back of the group and helping anyone who gets in trouble – mechanical, physical, or cartographical.

Another quality of a good ride leader is less directly about the group. It involves maintaining good relations with other cyclists and community members. When I lead a group out of Texas Corners and notice that traffic is heavy, I ask the group to ride single file until we turn off of 8th St. It is only a mile or so. But I believe that minimizing the amount that we impede traffic can also minimize the amount of motorist hostility directed at our group and other cyclists. Ride leaders also should consider relations with other cyclists. When we overtake other cyclists, it can be a really cool experience for them, or really unsettling. Warning and friendliness make the difference. I blew up four miles from the end because my group was moving pretty fast. We had a nice long straightaway back to the parking lot and the pace was picking up. We were doing about 22

mph and I could tell that we were only going to gain speed as we got closer to the finish. I could see two cyclists ahead of us. They were clearly recreational: chatting and not focused on form or even riding in a straight line! I was concerned that if our train snuck up and passed them at 22+ while they were doing 10 or 12 mph they might have an unpleasant experience. They might get scared and wobble into another rider causing a crash. At the least they might think we were jerks, and our ride could inadvertently foment schism amongst cyclists. So, I sprinted off the front with everything I had for about 90 seconds. I needed to go fast enough to get up to them, slow to their pace and communicate that the group was coming. I figured I needed to beat the group by about 10 seconds. Well, mission accomplished. I made it, had a friendly chat with the pair and got them edged closer to the white line. By the time our peloton whooshed past, I was cooked. There wasn't enough time for me to recover from the effort I put in to get back on the bus. No biggie – I know the route and can ride 3 ½ miles by myself. Though I wasn't able to participate in the final stop sign sprint, it felt good to ensure that my group and the other pair of riders had a safe and positive night.

All the foregone paragraphs describe various aspects of being a good ride leader. But the outcome and evidence of a good leader is that they make you want to ride your bike. Whatever the particular ingredients, the result of good ride leader alchemy is a desire for the group to keep riding. So here is my bottom line: A good ride leader is one who makes you want to ride your bike. Even if you blow up four miles from the end.

This piece was originally published on my blog "Thinking for Success" at johnknowlton.substack.com. Every Wednesday I sent out mental models for being more productive, efficient, and better relationships. Weekends are for cycling, travel, song lyrics and other things that fall out of my brain.

E-mail: editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org.

KBC History and Mission (found on our excellent website, kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

Established in 1971, the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club (KBC) is an organization devoted to addressing the needs of bicycle-riding enthusiasts in the Kalamazoo area by offering a variety of rides throughout the bike season, engaging in community bicycling advocacy, and educating both its members and the general public about bike safety.

From KBC's Constitution: The purpose of the Club shall be to promote bicycling; to encourage and facilitate touring, races, bicycle outings, and all forms of recreational bicycling activities; to defend and protect the rights of bicyclists; to secure a better understanding and recognition of the need for safer riding conditions; to encourage the allocation of facilities for bicycling on public lands; to cooperate with the public authorities in the observance of all traffic regulations; to provide an opportunity for members to socialize with others who have an interest in bicycling; and to recognize bicycles as vehicles used for pleasure, fitness and transportation. The Club will cooperate with other organizations with a similar goal and purpose.

From the editor: You may have noticed that the club was founded in 1971 – that's 50 years ago. How might we acknowledge or celebrate a half-century of service to the cycling community in Kalamazoo? A half-century ride? Surely you have some good ideas! Please send them to editor@KalamazooBicycleClub.org.